

Wycombe Wanderers 3, Oxford City 0

HORDES of spectators began to drift clear of the Loakes Park terraces minutes before full time on Saturday. But they left fully contented having just witnessed another slick 90 minute display from Wycombe's new-look Wanderers.

Suddenly there is no holding them. With speed, decision and attack their three keys to success, they dismissed neighbouring Oxford City in much the same manner as they had Hitchin Town a fortnight earlier, and would have done but for polar conditions at Clapton last week.

Although City rarely offered any more positive retaliation than mundane Hitchin had, it can be argued with conviction that the vital brand of Wanderers' football allowed them little chance to do so.

Wycombe took an immediate initiative . . . and kept it for all but five minutes midway through the second half. Ironically this isolated stage provided the prelude to a decisive two-goal burst from Tony Horseman, who along with his captain, Keith Samuels, acted energetically on the constant support of Len Worley.

The visiting forward line was stifled, more often than not, outside the Wycombe 'area', with Lou Temel and Charlie Gale chaining wingers Hellyer and Woodley, while Lailey and Rundle swept up direct approach work.

Indeed, John Maskell achieved a third consecutive 'shut-out' with a minimum of effort.

His one scare came early on, in the 8th minute, when Temel pushed the ball away from in front of an otherwise unguarded goal-line.

Two minutes earlier Oxford also suffered a moment's misadventure, Horseman forcing a corner. But, it was after 12 minutes that Wycombe took the lead. A 25-yarder from Gale soared low, but although Shippey parried the threat, within seconds the ball returned, and linkman Dave Thomas unleashed a roaring 15-yard shot to which the 'keeper had no answer.

A Worley corner four minutes later found the waiting head of Samuels ready to transfer it over the line. Yet a foul on Shufflebotham ruled out the 'goal', and Wanderers were to be frustrated until the closing minutes of play before they could add to their score.

After 39 minutes, Horseman pulled down a passing ball for partner Samuels, who stormed in only to gain too much height with his kick when a lower drive might have brought better results.

A short-lived attempt to swing the game in the second half was foiled when Maskell clutched a Hellyer floater after 47 minutes.

And Wanderers proceeded to repeat the treatment dished out prior to the interval. A second goal had to come and a Worley free kick on 52 minutes seemed a likely enough prospect as it passed along to Horseman. However, a desperate save from Shippey turned the ball round the post, after Wanderers' number ten had lined up a true aim.

Samuels headed into Shippey's grip ten minutes later, a fate which also lay in store for Barry Baker's drive loosed from outside the Oxford area after 64 minutes.

Soon after, however, Oxford forced a corner on the left, and two shots were barged down before even emerging from a scrum which had been hastily formed to safeguard the Wycombe net.

The ever-diligent Lailey diverted Hellyer on his way to goal to concede a throw-in on 75 minutes, and with the little right-winger working for a short spell in the role of second striker, City briefly threatened to trip Wanderers up in the search for points.

Also at stake was the satisfaction of avenging December's Amateur Cup exit at the White House . . . a task soon to be completed with interest.

For Wanderers jolted back into a final, and decisive, offensive scoring twice to give their rivals a parting reminder of what might have been, seven days before Oxford travel north to Skelmersdale for the second round tie.

Twelve minutes from time, a short pass split City's line finding Horseman placed to deliver number two.

Worley swung round for a rising shot which Shippey held two minutes later.

But Horseman found another empty pocket in which to work after 82 minutes and rammed home a third.

MATCH DETAILS

Wycombe: J. Maskell; L. Temel, C. Gale; J. Lailey, I. Rundle, D. Thomas; L. Worley, B. Baker, K. Samuels, A. Horseman, L. Merrick.

Oxford: J. Shippey; M. Ramsden, G. Pullin; S. Morton, E. Shufflebotham, Chadwick; A. Hellyer, A. Pentecost, K. Oram, T. Bradbury, J. Woodley.

Half-time: Wycombe 1, Oxford 0.

Scorers—Wycombe: Thomas (12), Horseman 2 (78, 82).